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with Author's Love.*

LATER POEMS.

[*For private circulation.*]

A FAREWELL.

My feet are set for other ways,
And I go forth alone,
Crushing aside the heartsickness
With careless look and tone.
I dash my hand across my eyes
With a laugh that's half a moan :—
Good-bye ! Good-bye ! God rest with thee,
My City—Fredericton.

Jan. 1880.

OFF PELORUS.

Crimson swims the sunset over far Pelorus,
Burning crimson tops its frowning crest of pine ;
Purple sleeps the shore and floats the wave before us,
Each where from the oar-stroke eddying warm like wine.

Soundless foams the creamy violet wake behind us ;
We but *see* the creaking of the laboured oar ;
We have stopped our ears, mad were we not to blind us,
Lest with eyes grown drunken sail we hence no more.

See the purple splendor o'er the island streaming,
O'er the prostrate sails and equal-sided ships :
Windless hangs the vine, and warm the sands lie gleaming,
Droop the great grape-clusters melting for the lips.

Sweet the golden calm, the glowing light elysian !
Sweet were red-mouthed plenty windless grown of pain !
Sweeter yet behold a sore-bewildering vision !—
Idly took we thought, and stopped our ears in vain.

Idly took we thought, for still our eyes betray us :—
Lo the white-limbed maids with beckoning arms divine,
Throbbing bosoms bare, loosed hair, soft hands to slay us,
Throats athrob with song across the charmed brine !

See the King ! He hearkens—hears their song—strains forward,
As some mountain snake attends the shepherd's reed ;
Now with urgent hand he bids us turn us shoreward :—
Bend the groaning oar now, give the king no heed.

Mark the wondrous music by his eyes wild yearning,
Eager lips, and mighty straining at the cords.
Well we guess the song, the subtle words and burning,
Sung to him the subtle king of burning words :—

"Much-enduring wanderer, honey-tongued, come nigher;
 Wisest Ruler, Bane of Ilion's lofty walls,
 Hear strange wisdom to thine uttermost desire,—
 Whatsoever in all the fruitful earth befalls."

So we rise up twain and make his bonds securer.
 Seethes the startled sea now from the surging blade;
 Leaps the dark ship forth, as we, with hearts grown surer,
 Eyes averse, and war-worn faces made afraid,

O'er the waste warm reaches drive our prow sea-cleaving,
 Past the luring death, into the folding night:—
 Home shall held us yet—and cease our wives from grieving—
 Safe from storm, and toil, and flame, and clanging fight.

Feb. 1881.

FROM FIRE.

Save what the night-wind woke of sweet
 And solemn sound, I heard alone
 The sleepless ocean's ceaseless beat,
 The surge's monotone.

Low down the south a dreary gleam
 Of white light smote the sudden swells,
 Evasive as a blissful dream,
 Or wind-borne notes of bells.

The waters lapping whispers stole
 Into my brain, and there effaced
 All human memories from my soul—
 An atom in a shifting waste.

Wierd fingers groping strove to raise
 Some numbing horror from my mind,
 And ever, as it met my gaze,
 The sharp truth struck me blind.

The keen-edged breath of the salt sea
 Stung; but a faint swift sulphurous smell
 Blew past, and I reeled dizzily
 As from the brink of hell,

One moment; but the swan-necked prow
 Sustained me, and once more I scanned
 The unfenced flood, against my brow
 Arching my lifted hand.

O'er all the unstable vague expanse
 I towered the lord supreme, and smiled;
 And marked the hard white sparkles glance,
 The dark vault wide and wild.

Again that faint wind swept my face—
 With hideous menace swept my eyes :
 I cowered back in my straitened place
 And groped with dim surmise,

Not knowing yet. Not knowing why,
 I turned, as one asleep might turn,
 And noted with half-curious eye
 The figure crouched astern.

On heaped up leopard-skins she crouched
 Asleep, and soft skins covered her,
 And scarlet stuffs where she was couched,
 Sodden with bilge-water,

Burned lurid with black stains, and smote
 My thought with waking pangs ; I saw
 The white arm drooping from the boat,
 Round-moulded, without flaw ;

The yellow sandals even-thonged ;
 The fair face wan with haunting pain :
 Then sudden crowding memories thronged,
 Like unpent sudden rain.

Clear stamped, as by white lightning when
 The swift flame rends the night, wide-eyed
 I saw dense streets, and flying men,
 And walls from side to side

Reeling, and great rocks fallen, a pall
 Above us, an encumbering shroud
 About our feet, and over all
 The awful Form that bowed

Our hearts,—the fiery scourge that smote
 The city,—the red Mount ; clear, clear
 I saw it,—and this lonely boat,
 And us two drifting here.

With one sharp cry I sprang and hid
 My face among the skins beside
 Her feet, and held her safe and chid
 The tumult till it died.

And crouched thus at her rescued feet,
 Save her low breath, I heard alone
 The sleepless ocean's ceaseless beat,
 The surge's monotone.

Chatham, Oct. 1881.

TO THE MEMORY OF SIBNEY LANIER.

Sullenly falls the rain,
Still hangs the dripping leaf,
And ah! the pain!
The slow dull ache of my grief!
That throbs—"In vain! In vain!
You have garnered your sheaf."

You have garnered your sheaf with the tares
Therein, and unripe wheat—
All that death spares,
Who has come with too swift feet,
Not turning for any prayers,
Nor all who entreat.

They entreated with tears; but I—
Ah me! all I can say
Is only a cry.
I had loved you many a day,
Yet never had fate drawn nigh
My way to your way.

My spirit made swift with love
Went forth to you in your place
Far off and above;
Though we met not face to face,
My elder Brother, yet love
Had pierced through space.

Chatham, Oct. 1881.

A BALLAD OF CALYPSO.

The loud black flight of the storm diverges
Over a spot in the loud-mouthed main,
Where, crowned with summer and sun, emerges
An isle unbeaten of wind or rain.
Here of its mystical mistress fain,
By whose kisses the whole broad earth seems poor,
Tarries the wave-worn prince, Troy's bane,
In the green Ogygian Isle secure.

To her voice our sweetest songs are dirges;
She gives him all things, counting it gain;
Ringed with the rocks and ancient surges,
How could Fate dis sever these twain!
But him no loves nor delights retain;
New knowledge, new lands, new loves allure,—
Forgotten the perils, and tears, and pain,
In the green Ogygian Isle secure.

So he spurns her kisses and gifts, and urges
 His weak skiff over the wind-vest plain,
 Till the grey of the sky in the grey sea merges,
 And nights reel round, and waver, and wane.
 He sits once more in his own domain ;
 No more the remote sea-walls immature ;—
 But ah ! for the love he shall clasp not again,
 In the green Ogygian Isle secure !

Envoi.

Princes, and ye whose delights remain,
 To the one good gift of the gods hold sure,
 Lest ye too mourn in vain, in vain,
 Your green Ogygian Isle secure.

Chatham, Nov. 1881.

RONDEAU.

To Louis Honore Frechette.

Laurels for Song ! and nobler bays,
 In old Olympian golden days
 Of clamour through the clear-eyed morn,
 No bowed triumphant head hath borne,
 Victorious in all Hellas' gaze.

They watched his glowing axles graze
 The goal, then rent the heaven with praise ;
 Still the supreamer heads have worn
 Laurels for song.

So thee, from no palaestra-plays
 A conqueror, to the gods we raise,
 Whose brows, of all our singers born,
 The sacred fillets chief adorn,—
 Who first of all our choir displays
 Laurels for song.

Chatham, Nov. 1881.

BROTHER CUTHBERT.

Cuthbert, open ; let me in !
 Cease your praying for a minute !
 Here the darkness seems to grin,
 Holds a thousand horrors in it ;
 Down the stony corridor
 Footsteps pace the stony floor.

Here they foot it, pacing slow,
 Monklike, one behind another :
 Don't you hear me ? Don't you know
 I'm a little nervous, Brother ?
 Won't you speak ? Then by your leave
 Here's a guest for Christmas Eve.

Shrive me, but I got a fright!
 Monks of centuries ago
 Wander back to see to-night
 How the old place looks:—Holloa!
 This the kind of watch you keep—
 Come to pray—and go to sleep!

Shame, man! Keep your vigil! Wake!
 Double penance eise your bones
 Soon will pay with wrench and ache
 For your tempting couch of stones.
 Hard and cold your couch and cell,
 Brother, yet you slumber well!

Ah, this mortal flesh is weak!
 Who is saintly there's no saying.
 Here is tears upon his cheek;
 And he sleeps, that should be praying,—
 Sleeps, and dreams, and murmurs: Nay,
 I'll not wake you; sleep away!

Holy saints, the night is keen!
 How the nipping wind does drive
 Through yon tree-tops bare and lean,
 Till their shadow seems alive,
 Patters through the bars, and falls
 Shivering on the floor and walls!

How yon patch of freezing sky
 Echoes back their bell-rings!
 Down in the grey city, nigh
 Severn, every steeple swings;
 All the busy streets are bright,—
 Many folk are out to-night.

—What's that, Brother? Did you speak?
 Christ save them that talk in sleep!
 Smile they howsoever meek,
 Somewhat in their hearts they keep.
 We, good souls, what shifts we make
 To keep talking while awake!

Christ be praised, that fetched me in
 Early, yet a youngling, while
 All unlearned in life and sin,
 Love and travail, grief and guile!
 For your world of two-score year's,
 Cuthbert, all you have is tears.

Dreaming, still he hears the bells
 As he heard them years ago,
 Ere he sought our quiet cells
 Iron-mouthed, and wronched with woe,
 Out of what dread storms who knows—
 Faithfullest of friends and foes.

Faithful was he aye, I ween,
 Pitiful, and kind, and wise ;
 But in mindful moods I've seen
 Flame enough in those sunk eyes :—
 Praised be Christ, whose timely Hand
 Plucked from out the fire this brand !

Now in dreams he's many miles
 Hence, he's back in Ireland.
 Ah, how tenderly he smiles,
 Stretching a caressing hand !
 Backward now his memory glides
 To old happy Christmas-tides.

Now once more a loving wife
 Holds him, now he sees his boys,
 Smiles at all their playful strife,
 All their childish mirth and noise ;—
 Softly now she strokes his hair—
 Ah, their world is very fair !

—Waking, all your loss shall be
 Unforgotten evermore.
 Sleep alone holds these for thee ;
 Sleep then, Brother. To restore
 All your heaven that has died
 Heaven and Hell may be too wide.

Sleep, and dream, and ~~be~~ awhile
 Happy, ~~as of old~~, once again—
 Soon you'll wake, and cease to smile,
 And your heart will sink with pain ;
 You will hear the merry town,
 And a weight will press you down.

Hungry-hearted, you will see
 Only the thin shadows fall
 From yon bleak-topped poplar-tree—
 Icy fingers on the wall ;
 You will watch them come and go,
 Telling o'er your count of woe.

—Nay, now, hear me ! how I prate !
 I, a foolish monk and old,
 Maundering o'er a life and fate
 To me unknown, by you untold :
 Yet I know your like to weep
 Soon, so, Brother, this night sleep.

Frederickton, Dec. 17th, 1881.

TO FREDERICTON IN MAY TIME.

This morning full of breezes and perfume—
 Brimful of promise of midsummer weather—
 When bees, and birds, and I are glad together,
 Breathes of the full-leaved season, when soft gloom
 Chequers thy streets, and thy close elms assume
 Round roof and spire the semblance of green billows ;
 Yet now thy glory is the yellow willows—
 The yellow willows full of bees and bloom.

Under their mealy blossoms black-birds meet,
 And robins pipe amid the cedars nigher ;
 Through the still elms I hear the ferry's beat ;
 The swallows chirp about the towering spire ;
 The whole air pulses with its weight of sweet,
 Yet not quite satisfied is my desire.

F'ron. May 24th, 1881.

THE SLAVE WOMAN.

Shedding cool drops upon the sun-baked clay,
 The dripping jar, brimfull, she rests a space
 On the well's dry white brink, and leans her face,
 Heavy with tears and many a heartsick day,
 Down to the water's lip, whence slips away
 A rivulet through the hot bright square apace ;
 And lo ! her brow hath lost each servile trace—
 The wave's cool breath hath won her thoughts as free.

Ah desolate one ! Thy fate thou hast forgot
 A moment ; the dull pain hath left those eyes
 Whose yearning pierces time, and space, and tears ;
 Thou seest what was once, but now is not,—
 By Niger thy bright home, thy Paradise,
 Unscathed of flame, and foe, and hostile spears.

June, 1881.

Charles G. Roberts.